



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**

St. Louis District

News Release

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Corps of Engineers Seeks Christmas Trees to Improve Fish Habitat

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Rend Lake encourages local citizens to participate in the annual Christmas tree recycling program. Christmas trees can be brought to the South Marcum Boat Ramp, or Dam West Boat Ramp. Christmas trees will be accepted at these locations until January 15, 2006.

Residents of Mt. Vernon and Jefferson County can contribute to the Rend Lake effort by donating trees. Continental Waste Industries will be collecting trees during a curbside pickup on Wednesday, January 4, 2006. This service is open to residents of Mt. Vernon and Jefferson County who have Continental Waste Industries trash collection. This is a free service provided by Continental Waste Industries. For more information please contact Keep Mount Vernon/Jefferson County Beautiful (618) 231-4899.

The donated trees will be bundled together and sunk in Rend Lake, creating underwater fish structures. These structures are excellent places for fish to rest. These underwater structures also encourage the growth of algae and zooplankton for young fish to feed upon and enhance growth. Structures will be placed in Rend Lake in mid-March by Corps of Engineers employees, Illinois Department of Natural Resources fisheries biologists, and volunteers.

Artificial or flocked trees (with artificial snow) cannot be accepted. The Corps asks that donors remove all tinsel, decorations, stands and plastic bags from the tree prior to placing at the drop area. Volunteers with boats or fishing/outdoor organizations are encouraged to help place the trees in the designated locations. A date for placing the trees in the lake will be determined at a later date. Persons wishing to volunteer or desiring further information should contact Jon Schulte at the Rend Lake Project Office at 618-724-2493.